



National Plan

The 40-page Green Paper on National Strategic Planning (**attached**) is a discussion document, but its release in September 2009 was followed by complaints. COSATU's General Secretary lambasted it. NEHAWU lambasted it because it was drafted and issued by the South African government, not the National Democratic Revolutionary Alliance. NEHAWU wrote:

"It is a known fact that the need for a high level planning and the planning commission and other modalities towards the establishment of the developmental state were agreed upon at the Alliance summit in October 2008.

"NEHAWU therefore believes that it is only proper that the Green Paper should be considered in the impending Alliance summit and that this should take place prior to further processes in parliament and government."

One of this Green Paper's merits was that it made a strong case for regular central planning on three "time horizons": 1-year Programmes of Action, 5-year Medium Term "Frameworks" corresponding to a maximum term of office between elections; and Long-Term, plus/minus 15-year, "Visions".

It makes this case in common-sense or bourgeois-bureaucratic terms, but it does not compromise with neo-liberal *laissez-faire* (French for "leave alone"). With this Green Paper, the necessity for planning (*dirigisme* or "steering" in French) became orthodoxy in South Africa.

The first National Strategic Planning Green Paper

This first Planning Green Paper was not itself a plan. It committed the Minister to produce the first national plan within a year (it actually took more than two years). It laid down the process by which the planning would be done – centrally, of course, but transparently, and not secretly or pre-emptively.

The major de-merit of the Green Paper from a communist point of view is shown by its frequent mention of something resembling an imaginary table of weaknesses and problems. In this list of weaknesses you find women, children, the disabled and the old, and those with low "social status" – meaning the working class.

Race, gender and lack of education are mentioned in the Green Paper, but never "class", or the "working class".

Instead, where race is mentioned you get more (balancing?) remarks about low “social status”, as if being working class and/or black is a disability or a disease that needs to be palliated, treated or cured.

The class struggle may be the engine of history, the Green Paper seems to imply, but it can't be considered in plans. The plans imagined in the Green Paper will be curative courses of treatment for ills. If this approach remains unchanged, then the strategic plans produced by the process described are bound to fall far short of what is necessary.

Class formation

The historical measure of change and of progress is the rate of class formation. The basis of Chinese revolutionary planning success in the last sixty years, for example, has been their constant attention to class formation. Even their few, now-long-past failures were a consequence of the same, correct, focus.

None of the goods, whether public or private, that the planning process is designed to maximise will be secure unless there is a steady and eventually overwhelming growth of the working class. By treating the working class as a “social status” problem, the Green Paper has the whole matter upside down, and will fail, if it does not get corrected.

Without any positive class orientation, the planning process as outlined in the Green Paper will default back to conservative bourgeois utilitarianism. The determination

towards planning that the Green Paper represents is a great leap forward, but it will come to nothing if the planning process is not infused with revolutionary class-consciousness. This is a job for the communists.

There is a great deal inside the Green Paper about protocol and government etiquette. Whether these things are really crucial will become apparent. We now have the “IPAP2” and the “New Growth Path” (NGP). How these other two planning exercises will correspond with the eventual National Plan is something we will have to wait to see.

Our graphic, above, representing communist planning, is the symbol of the former German Democratic Republic, which was in its time a good friend to South Africa.

In the next post we will contrast and compare the revised and much shorter Green Paper that arrived in January, 2010 and was executed. The commissioners were appointed on 30 April 2010. Their first effort was the “Diagnostic”, in June 2011, which as foreseen (in 2010) by the Communist University, proceeded to list various ills that were to be cured. The National Development Plan was published on the 11th of November, 2011 and was endorsed by the ANC just over a year later, at its 53rd National Conference in December, 2012.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-texts: [SA Government Green Paper on National Strategic Planning, 2009](#).
- To download any of the CU courses in PDF files [please click here](#).